

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

TEXAS NATURE FEDERATION GETS RESULTS. Their recent campaign for protection for Brown Pelicans and to defeat a proposed bounty on "Buzzards" brought about the desired results. The bounty proposal was defeated and the Brown Pelican is on the list of birds protected in Texas! Jerry E. Stillwell, Secretary of this organization, reports that the fight will be continued to give protection to woodpeckers and Road-runners.

GAME IMPORTATIONS ON TRIAL. Conservation clubs urge and almost compel game departments to bring cotton-tails, Bob-white, pheasants, wild turkeys, etc., from other states and from foreign places for release in efforts to establish new game species or to stimulate local game populations. Quite a few states are continuing to turn out in northern coverts Bob-whites from the South. Rabbits are brought from tularemia districts and tame turkeys are put into wild turkey ranges. This hit-or-miss policy of game importation for release is now definitely being challenged, not only by students of wildlife management (and this includes many trained officials and staff men), but also by clear-thinking sportsmen and other conservationists. The challenge is based on sound ecology and also on a desire for economy. Ohio wisely uses its surplus of pheasants in Wood County for release in poorer hunting areas. Texas proposes moving deer and wild turkeys from established range to possible new territory, presumably using only native stock. Michigan had poor luck with imported, wild-trapped Hungarian Partridges but established a fine game farm stock by rearing breeders from a few clutches of eggs taken from the nests of wild birds already in Michigan, near the Ohio line. Many more examples of wise and appropriate restocking might be listed; but as yet the local and native stocks and species have been neglected in favor of exotics and outside sources. In commenting on Bob-white restocking practices, Herbert L. Stoddard says: "we always make a point of getting stock from the nearest available source as being probably better adjusted to the environment where we liberate them." Why cannot game officials heed the advice and example of recognized experts?

WILD TURKEYS. From Pennsylvania to Arizona various states are engaged in or are just beginning to think about wild turkey management. This usually takes the form of restrictions on shooting, as in the case of the complete protection recently given these birds by Missouri legislation, and the releasing of captive-reared stocks. In general these methods have not given the expected increases. Some of the difficulties confronting wild turkey restoration have been presented by Harold L. Blakey in the Biological Survey Leaflet No. 77. Wild turkeys thrive best where they are given adequate protection from poaching and where cover and food conditions continue favorable to them. Large acreages under protection favor the survival and increases of wild turkeys as is pointed out in the following note from Herbert L. Stoddard, Director of the Cooperative Quail Study near Thomasville, Georgia:

"One of the oldest and most consolidated groups of private game preserves in the Southeast is located between Thomasville, Georgia, and Tallahassee, Florida; over two hundred and fifty thousand acres being under intensive management for quail, wild turkey, and other game. The northern portion of the preserve area is rather heavily wooded with pine on the uplands and mixed hardwoods along water courses.

"By heavy planting of a year-around food supply (to supplement the uncertain natural 'mast' crops), *moderate* control of a few of the more destructive predators (particularly wild cats and foxes when they become too numerous), and conservative shooting practices, the owners have gradually built up a heavy

stocking of practically pure strain Eastern Wild Turkey. These turkeys have greatly increased in number and extended their territory during the past fifteen years. I estimated that there are between five and ten thousand of these grand birds on the preserves under discussion, while similar groups are being developed under up-to-date management practices near Albany, Georgia, to the north, along the great rivers and coastal section of South Carolina, and at various other points scattered over the deep Southeast. The part being played by private preserves in increasing and maintaining such a species as the Eastern Wild Turkey and in providing large protected acreages for many forms of desirable wildlife is little appreciated by ornithologists as yet, though it is of rapidly increasing significance as far as the South is concerned."

THE PITTMAN-ROBERTSON ACT OF 1937. No seriously interested conservationist should fail to get acquainted with the activities (at least in his own state) under the provisions of this Act which provides for return to the states of the tax on ammunition and firearms, or about \$2,750,000 annually. Activities fall into three groups: (1) Land purchase for wildlife rehabilitation, (2) Land development, such as food and cover improvement or water stabilization, and (3) Research directed to the practical solution of problems in wildlife restoration. For the year ending June 1939, four states received as their shares over \$45,000: Michigan, Texas, New York and Pennsylvania. Apportionment is on the basis of area and the number of small game licensees. Samples of the projects now approved and under way are given below, as announced from the office of Albert M. Day, in charge of "Pittman-Robertson" work for the U. S. Biological Survey.

1. "*Arizona Inaugurates Statewide Survey.*" The program calls for a wildlife survey to inventory the principal game and furbearing species as a first step in preparation for wiser use of the funds to be available for development and land acquisition.

2. "*Texas Restores Deer and Turkeys*" heads the announcement that this state will use some of its funds to redistribute and restore white-tailed deer and wild turkeys, moving deer from over-populated areas to uninhabited but suitable range. (We hope they will not yield to the too-common practice of stocking "tame" turkeys of mixed or unknown origins.)

3. "*Michigan to Study Sharp-tailed Grouse and Prairie Chicken.*" In less than twenty years the "Sharp-tails" have come from scarcity to abundance in the Upper Peninsula, or at least from obscurity to a position of importance as a game species. Michigan will use "Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration" funds to make a study of these birds and the Prairie Chicken because very little is known of the factors which limit their numbers, and a management program is needed.

4. "*Illinois Purchases Green River Waterfowl and Upland Game Refuge.*" The Illinois State Department of Conservation has submitted a Federal Aid project for the purchase of an area containing numerous potholes and marshy spots, making it a desirable area for waterfowl, Prairie Chickens, fur-bearing animals, and other forms of wildlife. Future plans call for development of the area as a waterfowl refuge and game management research station. The boundaries will be fenced, an administration building constructed, and a series of small impoundments will be made. The research program will include experiments in game management.

Whether or not the new Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program will succeed depends, to be sure, on the choice of projects in each state but it also depends on the support of sympathetic and understanding conservationists, nature lovers as well as shooters. Look into the plans your Conservation Department or Division of Game is developing under its "Pittman-Robertson" or Federal Aid opportunities and form your own opinions.

—WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Miles D. Pirnie, Chairman